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FOR WHA/CEN - ROIS BEAL, INR/B

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PINR](#) [BH](#)

SUBJECT: BIO -- BELIZE: John Briceno,
Opposition Party Leader

REF: BELMOPAN 0187

¶1. John Briceno was elected to be the Opposition Party Leader at the People's United Party (PUP) leadership convention on Sunday, March 30, 2008. Following is his biography.

AKA: Johnny Briceno; or Juan Briceno

Address as: Hon. John Briceno

DOBP: July 17, 1960, Orange Walk Town, Belize

¶2. Education:

1996 - Participant in the International Visitor's Program to the U.S. during the 1996 U.S. presidential primaries.

1985 - Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Texas

1980 - Associate's Degree in Business Administration from St. John's College, Belize

¶3. Career/Employment:

Briceno is considered a career businessman. He owns a "One Stop Gas Station" in his hometown where he is also the Shell Belize dealer. He also owns a Shell gas station in Belize City. In addition, Briceno is CEO of two TV and radio media companies: Centaur Communications Corporation in Orange Walk Town and Pegasus Communications Corporation in Ladyville. He has a reputation as a philanthropist for having sponsored numerous sporting events and teams, providing deserving students with books and scholarships, donating supplies such as computers.

¶4. Political Affiliation:

Briceno has been a long-standing PUP member. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in June 1993 for Orange Walk Central. In 1994 he was elected as an Orange Walk Town Board Member. During that same year he was elected as co-chairman of the PUP. In 1998 after the PUP national election victory, he was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and given the portfolio of Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment.

In August 2004, Briceno was one of seven cabinet ministers who resigned from Government citing the "mismanagement of public finances" as the main reason. The issue was temporarily resolved and Briceno returned to Cabinet with his previous portfolio along with the added responsibility of Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance. However, in June 2007 he resigned from Cabinet a second time after he was offered a reduced role in the Cabinet, again after disagreeing with the use of "public funds". Briceno was reelected to the House of Representatives by the Orange Walk Central constituency for the fourth time in February 2008.

In March 2008 he was elected Party Leader for the PUP, narrowly beating another opponent.

¶5. Family:

He is married to Rosanna Briceno with whom he has two children.

16. Other:

Briceno is fluent in both English and Spanish.

DIETER